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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000296

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PROG](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA CHIEF OF STAFF ON FOLLOW-UP WITH KUWAIT AND  
TURKEY FOLLOWING KUWAIT ECONOMIC SUMMIT AND FM ZEBARI TRIP  
TO ANKARA

REF: A. BAGHDAD 175  
[1](#)B. 08 BAGHDAD 3148

Classified By: PMIN Robert Ford for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Zebari's Chief of Staff, Ambassador Srood Najib, provided Emboffs an update February 3 on follow-up with Kuwait and Turkey, in light of discussions FM Zebari had on the margins of the January 19-20 Kuwait Economic Summit and during his January 23 visit to Ankara. Referring to both countries, Najib stressed the GOI's desire to "close the files" on all long-standing issues. The Iraqi MFA still hopes for a visit by the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, perhaps in March. Najib also shared with us efforts by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to remove current Deputy Foreign Minister Haj Hamoud from his position, and provided the latest on the status of Iraqi ambassadorial appointments to Arab states, including the news that Saudi Arabia had just granted agreement to Iraq's Ambassador-designate to Riyadh. Other issues discussed with Najib in this meeting are reported septel. End Summary.

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Kuwait  
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[1](#)2. (C) Najib said the visit of the Kuwaiti FM to Baghdad, originally envisioned for February (reftel) is now more likely to occur in early March. He confirmed that Deputy Foreign Minister Haj Hamoud was in Kuwait this week with a GOI delegation reviewing a range of bilateral issues that with hope will set the stage for the Kuwaiti FM's visit to Baghdad. Econ Counselor asked Najib whether DFM Hamoud had provided notification to the Kuwaitis of the upcoming oil pipeline survey work scheduled to commence in the Northern Gulf later in the month. Najib said he did not know for certain and promised to call Hamoud in Kuwait to verify that he had done so. Saying he was speaking in confidence, Najib also relayed that the MFA had recently received a note from Prime Minister Maliki stating that the PMO will not accept DFM Hamoud's signature on any official documents, as they consider him retired as of December 31. Najib made clear that this is a transparent effort to replace Hamoud in the MFA with "one of the PM's guys." While the MFA has not accepted this PMO diktat, Najib made clear that any documents agreed to in Kuwait would be signed by Iraq's Charge.

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Turkey  
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[1](#)3. (C) Turning to Turkey, Najib said Zebari's meetings in Ankara had gone very well and covered the full range of issues: "PKK, oil, trade, everything." (Note: Following Ankara, Zebari traveled to Athens, Davos, Geneva and is currently in Rome. He will return to Baghdad February 6 and Ambassador Crocker will see him on February 8 for a farewell lunch. End note). The Turks, he said, were very cooperative and President Gul was "very understanding" when Zebari

underscored that the U.S. and Iraq both need to be involved in addressing the PKK issue. On gas exports to Turkey, Najib said the FM supported the effort, so long as it also would be a conduit for exports into Europe. When pressed, Najib admitted that it was not yet GOI policy to support a gas export pipeline, but that the MFA thought this had great merit. (Comment: Zebari and Najib are both Kurds, and the Turks are working this deal with the Kurdish Regional Government, not the government in Baghdad. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) Najib said that one of outcomes of the Ankara visit was agreement to convene an Iraqi-Turkish bilateral committee, headed by both countries' foreign ministers, but also including other ministers as appropriate. The first meeting would be a purely bilateral gathering, Najib said, but added that in the second phase the U.S. would be invited to participate. Najib said the first meeting would be held in March in Ankara, and a second meeting in July in Baghdad. In response to Emboff's observation that March will be a busy month with important bilateral meetings planned with both Kuwait and Turkey, Najib said "we are trying to do our best before the government changes . . . we don't want MFA to fall into some other hands unless that person is a pro."

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Ambassadors On the Way to Post  
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¶5. (C) As the meeting concluded, Najib provided a quick rundown on the status of Iraqi ambassadors whose appointments were announced last September (ref B). He confirmed that Iraq's new Ambassador to Syria, Ala'a Jowadi, had arrived in

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Damascus January 28; Iraq's new Ambassador to Lebanon Omar al-Barzanji had arrived in Beirut January 29; Iraq's new Ambassador to Qatar, Jawad al-Hindawi, would be departing Baghdad that day to take up his duties in Doha; and its new Ambassador to Turkey would be heading to Ankara the week of February 8. In very welcome news, Najib also told us that Saudi Arabia had just granted agreement to Iraqi Ambassador-designate Ghanem al-Jumaili. Al-Jumaili is currently Iraq's Ambassador in Tokyo and would soon be returning to Baghdad. Najib said he could be expected to arrive in Riyadh in the coming weeks. The MFA, he said, is still waiting for Bahrain to grant agreement to Ambassador-designate Abdul Amir Abu Tubaik. As for the naming of Iraqi Ambassadors to the UAE, Kuwait, and Egypt, Najib confirmed that they still remain a bone of contention between FM Zebari and PM Maliki and that Maliki is still pushing to fill these slots with some of his advisors.

CROCKER